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RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 3870  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
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RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [CASC](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: KINSHASA UPDATE: SITUATION IN CAPITAL RETURNING TO  
NORMAL

REF: A. PRETORIA 1053

[B](#). KINSHASA 360

[C](#). KINSHASA 357 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)1. (U) The central Gombe district of Kinshasa remains calm four days after fighting broke out between elements of the Congolese military (FARDC) and guard forces of Senator and former Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba. There have been no reports of fighting since early morning on March 24. Vehicle traffic, including public transportation, was moving normally in Gombe the morning of March 26 and businesses were open. There is a reduced presence of Congolese security forces on the streets, with some elements of the Republican Guard, Congolese police and FARDC remaining near Bemba's former official residence on Boulevard de 30 Juin and his private riverside residence.

[1](#)2. (U) All USG personnel in country are accounted for. There have been no reports of any AmCits injured in the violence. The American School several miles west of Gombe is open. The French and Belgian schools, located near the main area of fighting March 22-23, are closed for clean-up operations will reopen March 27.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Bemba remains at the South African embassy compound where he and his wife have been since the evening of March [1](#)22. Bemba's children, who had been at the Belgian school, have since been moved to the South African compound. Sydney Mufamadi, South Africa's Minister of Local and Provincial Government, who was appointed by President Mbeki as his envoy (ref A), has not arrived in the DRC.

[1](#)4. (U) President Kabila chaired a meeting of the Council of Ministers March 24. The Council declared in a communique that the government was in control of the situation and encouraged the population to go about normal activities. It stated that judicial proceedings were being started against Bemba as well as the "mutinous" officers and soldiers. The Council expressed its regrets to those who lost loved ones and congratulated the FARDC and police for quickly restoring order.

[1](#)5. (U) The Council's communique, signed by Minister of Information Toussaint Tshilombo, gave a preliminary count of 60 killed and 74 injured, pending further investigation. The humanitarian organization Caritas estimated March 25 around 150 killed and 148 wounded based on surveys of local hospitals and the central morgue. International Red Cross officials told us March 26 they had observed more than 100 dead in city mortuaries and more than 100 wounded in local hospitals.

¶6. (U) The National Assembly's executive secretariat met March 24 with leaders of the Assembly's political groupings, including MLC Secretary General and group president Francois Mwamba and MLC Executive Secretary Thomas Luhaka, to discuss the March 22-23 fighting. The conference released a unanimous communique condemning the clashes and calling for sanctions against those who looted or committed other acts of violence. The Assembly is expected to hold a plenary session March 26 and create a special commission to examine the causes of the violence.

¶7. (U) UNHCR has reported more than 40 members of Bemba's guard force fled their camp at Maluku just north of Kinshasa across the Congo River to Brazzaville. An initial group of about 100 arrived in Brazzaville March 23, followed by a smaller group of 54 March 24. A total of 44 are believed to be members of Bemba's guard force; the remainder are family members who lived with the soldiers at Maluku. UNHCR officials are providing the refugees with blankets and other provisions.

¶8. (SBU) The Ambassador participated in a March 25 meeting with SRSG Swing and "P3 plus two" chiefs of mission (U.K, France, U.S., Belgium, and South Africa), and follow-up action is being taken, including requests for a joint demarche with President Kabila and then with Prime Minister Gizenga.

¶9. (SBU) Post had an extended Emergency Action Committee meeting on March 26 (ref B).  
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